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Jobs are key, say Osceola County Economic Summit attendees

Lansing – If our economy is to survive, Michigan and local leaders must do more to help businesses create and retain jobs. That was the consensus reached when Sen. Michelle McManus (R-Lake Leelanau) and other state officials joined local business people to discuss the economic climate in Osceola County Monday.

“This is not the end of the work, it’s only the beginning,” McManus said of the summit. “I hope this event gave everyone new ideas and hope, even during these tough economic times.”

The summit was held as Republican legislators were unveiling an unprecedented proposal to provide much-needed job opportunities for Michigan residents.

McManus said the proposal, announced by Senate Majority Leader Ken Sikkema (R-Wyoming), would help create manufacturing jobs, spur new small-business investment for more job opportunities and provide incentives to expand the state’s slow-moving economy by getting Michigan residents back to work.

“The rest of the nation is already seeing signs of economic recovery, and Michigan is being left behind,” McManus said. “Our workers cannot afford to wait any longer. The time for action is now.”

Senate Finance Committee Chair Nancy Cassis (R-Nov) also attended the Osceola County event, speaking on Michigan tax policy and economic competitiveness. She emphasized the need for the state to stop taxing the money employers spend on providing health benefits to their employees.

Approximately 50 people attended the summit, representing local businesses, economic development organizations, and members of the media and public. Presenters included Dan Massy of the Osceola Economic Alliance and the Michigan Economic Development Corporation, Paul Griffith of Michigan Works! West Central, and Reed City businessmen Tom Halladay of H&R Screw and Jim Repo of Yoplait.

The Osceola Economic Alliance, Reed City Downtown Development Authority, Evart DDA-LDFA, Michigan Works!, and Sen. McManus co-sponsored the event, held at Eagle Village. Dave Porteous, chairman on the Michigan State University Board of Trustees and a local attorney, served as emcee.

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